



# THE STAR OF THE EAST

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A Journal dealing with the Syrian Church in India  
and the other Eastern Churches.

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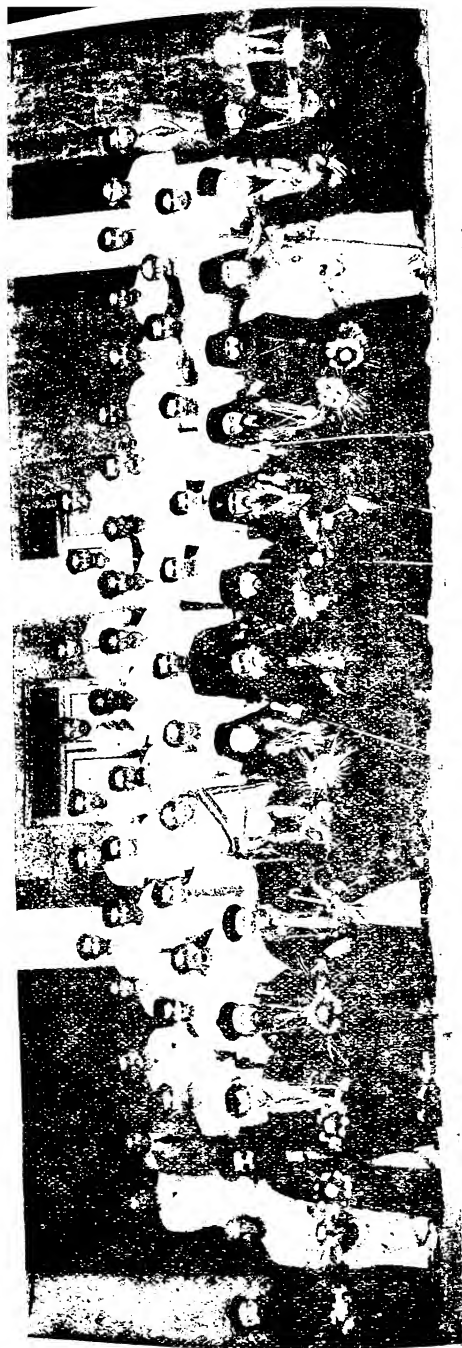
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## EDITORIAL

**The New Delhi Assembly.** Nobody can gainsay the fact that the Third Assembly of the W. C. C. was a remarkable achievement of careful and spirit guided organization and cooperation. In a vast gathering of some two thousand people of different nations, races cultures and tongues and of such long duration lasting over a period of about three weeks, how smoothly and efficiently all things worked. The volume of work gone through also was enormous, as every one felt the strain of continuous work day in and day out. The plenary, sectional and sub-sectional meetings and study classes lasted from morning till late at night. The addresses in the plenary sessions had to be mimeographed and distributed before, besides the reports of sections and sub-sections which were meeting daily, which entailed work all through the night for the office staff. Even if all the men and money were available without the zealous and hearty cooperation of one and all concerned the work could not have been so successfully turned out. Certainly the spirit of God was brooding over the whole affair.

At Amsterdam the churches got together, at Evanston they decided to stay together and at New Delhi they openly declared to grow together. If the child was born at Amsterdam, in the brief period of six years it reached its adolescence and received its confirmation at Evanston and on the 13th year at New Delhi a happy marriage had taken place of W. C. C. with the I. M. C. This joining of hands has sealed to make mission the main aim of the whole movement. The Ecumenical Movement will now certainly move with a mission.

The most noticeable achievement of the whole Assembly was the addition of 23 more churches to its membership. The most conspicuous addition was that of the Russian Church, with 50 million people together with the other iron curtain churches of Bulgaria, Rumania and Poland with 13 million people. In the Central

Committee also Orthodoxy has 17 members, while Europe and N. America have only 20 each. The centre of gravity of a movement which was fundamentally Anglican-Protestant centred is now gradually shifting to the east. This may be divinely ordained. East is the cradle of Christianity and it has a contribution of its own to make to the sum total of the Christian movement but due to various circumstances she could not contribute her share.

Eastern Orthodoxy was so little known in the west. Even those who knew, their knowledge was biased and twisted. They thought of Eastern Orthodoxy as full of superstition and meaningless ceremonials. Many were under the impression that they were so static and custom ridden that they were unfit to survive. It was only with the world wars that the west began to know the eastern churches better. With the coming in of the Russian Church into the membership of the W. C. C. the place and influence of the Eastern churches over the world organization have been considerably augmented. The number of the Eastern prelates in the assembly has been so noticeable this time that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey, is reported to have said, "If all the beards at the assembly were cut and stuffed, what a holy mattress they would make."

**The Visit of the Eastern Delegates to the Syrian Church of Malabar.** The twenty and odd Eastern delegates, who could find time to come to Kerala, must have realized that by coming to India that they have not come to a totally nonchristian country. The number of Christians they met, the wayside crosses they came across and the number of churches scattered all over the country in such great profusion must have been quite a contrast to what they experienced in New Delhi. There is in Malabar the old church which is believed to have been founded by the Apostle St. Thomas. From very ancient times St. Thomas and India were very closely associated. The two terms are almost synonymous, says Dr. Mingana. The connection of the church was with the Catholicos of the East, who had his headquarters in Tigris, and was the glory of the Persian Church, whose missionary activities were second to none in all Christian history. Steady stream of missionaries used to come to India from the Persian Church whose tombs are here even today. There are still to be seen certain Persian crosses with Pahlavi inscriptions which are over a thousand years old. The church's connection with the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch is only of comparatively recent times. It is this connection that aligns the Malabar Church with the minor Eastern churches which are anti-chalcedonian. But it should be remembered that the Malabar Church had no direct part in the Council of Chalcedon. Nevertheless it too had been stigmatised as a schismatic church. Since the Council of Chalcedon, hardly ever the Eastern churches had the opportunity of getting together as they did here this time. During the period of their

stay here the representatives of the Greek, Russian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Armenian and Ethiopian Churches have not only met together, but prayed and worshipped together. The people of this country had the golden opportunity to see the various liturgies celebrated, which they seldom had seen before. The guests also attended the celebration of the Syrian Liturgy and preached in churches. The visit of the Eastern prelates was undoubtedly an epoch making event in the history of Eastern churches. One could only wish that this could happen more often.

**Intercommunion and the Ecumenical Movement.** In all the three world assemblies certain churches sponsored open communion services but in none of them all the member churches have participated. At Evanston in 1954 St. Mark's Episcopal church was the scene of the open communion, but not even all the Episcopalians had participated in it. The Anglo-catholics had even violently protested against it. At Lausanne in 1960 the World Youth conference with some 1800 delegates strongly appealed to the World Council to do away the scandal of separate tables at the World Council general meetings. The 160 and odd youth participants at New Delhi reiterated the appeal of Lausanne. The Church of India, Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan arranged an open communion service in which not even all the Anglicans have participated. Some among them have even expressed strong views against it. The position of the World Council in this matter is that the World Council is not a church and it is for the individual churches to decide if it should have intercommunion with another. This also appears to be the position taken up by the Faith and order Commission of the WC. The Orthodox Churches have made it clear that for them intercommunion is not a means to church reunion but is the end itself. Holy Communion does not mean the same thing to different churches. To some it is simply a symbol, a remembrance. To others it is a supreme act of faith. The Bread and the Wine are the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, in which one can participate only after thorough Repentance and Absolution, the result of which would be an absolute Renewal of life. Where there is such wide conflict of views, how can there be intercommunion. The Archbishop of Canterbury has rightly said in the matter of reunion of churches there must be respect for truth. The same is true of intercommunion.

**Welcome to the Rev. Fr. Paul Varghese Appointed as an Associate Gen. Secretary of World Council.** The Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar is happy over the appointment of one of her members to the responsible position of an associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. We extend to him our hearty congratulations in being appointed to such a high and responsible office and may we hope that in absolute dependance on God he will handle the difficult task of the Director of Ecumenical Action, which

includes programmes on the Laity, on Youth, on the cooperation of Men, Women and Church and Society and the graduate school at Bossey. By this appointment the authorities have made clear that they seek for better participation of Asiatics and members of the Eastern Churches in the World Council affairs.

Fr. Paul Varughese is a young man of 39. He served on the personal staff of the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie from 1956-59. During this period he was chief lecturer in religion at the University College of Addis Ababa. From 1954-57 he was the General Secretary of the Orthodox Syrian Christian Movement in India. It was in 1947 that he went to Ethiopia as a school teacher. There he quickly mastered fluency in Amharic language, which brought him to the attention of the Emperor. He also wrote a primer of Amharic.

He went to U. S. in 1950 where he graduated from Goshen College in Indiana. Then he proceeded to Princeton Theological Seminary from where he took the B. D. degree in 1954. Both at Goshen and Princeton he earned distinguished scholarship citations. Upon graduating from Princeton he returned to India where he helped to establish a retreat house at Alwaye. In 1956 he went back to Ethiopia where he was on the personal staff of the Emperor for three years. In 1959 he went to Yale from where he took the S. T. M. In 1960 he studied at the Oxford University and gave two courses of lectures. In 1961 he returned to India and was ordained a priest of the Orthodox Syrian Church. At the World Council's Third Assembly in New Delhi he led the Bible study for the section on Service. May God help and guide him in the onerous task that is laid on him is our humble prayer.

**The Population Explosion and its Consequences.** The population of the world is rapidly increasing. In every two minutes there are 170 births and in every hour it is 5000 more. Every day the net increase of population is 120,000, it is by subtracting the daily deaths of 150,000 from the daily births of 270,000. On an yearly basis, there are 48 million more births than deaths, or the rate of increase of population is 1.7 per cent.

The present world population is two billion nine hundred million, and it will double in the next forty years. Two billion people live in economically backward areas and three-fourths of them do not have enough to eat. The span of life in Norway is 75 years while in Ghana it is only 31. In Norway of the 1000 children born alive 16 will die before they are one year old. More than 5 times as many will die in Yugoslavia and 8 times as many in Chile. In at least 88 countries the average income per person per day is 50 cents or less. In 57 of these countries the annual per capita income is \$100 per year. Between morning and night time an average urban worker in the U. S. would eat 4.5 pounds of

food. His counterpart in India would eat only 1.25 pounds of food in the same period, and 85 per cent of it will be rice. In other words, the East starves, while the West "slims." In India the intake of calories per day is 1,890, while in Ireland it is 3,510 daily.

What does it all mean? We have to do our best to restrict the population growth, not by artificial means but by the exercise of higher powers. It is here religion has to play its part. If man descends to the level of ordinary animals, he will lose his intrinsic worth. It is also our duty to free us from hunger.

## THE NEW DELHI ASSEMBLY IN RETROSPECT

The Rev. Dr. C. T. EAPEN, *Editor, The Star of the East.*

The two previous world assemblies have been held in the western world, one in Amsterdam in 1948 and the other in Evanston in 1954. It was a venture of faith to shift the venue of the world Christian conference from the Christian west to the non-Christian east. Christianity is neither eastern nor western, it is Catholic. So it is only in the fitness of things that it should gravitate from its usual western haunts to the east to make it as comprehensive as possible. The outcome of this change, all would admit had been on the whole very satisfactory. India in its traditional way offered the gathering a very warm welcome, which was evidenced by the place the daily newspapers like *The Statesman* and the *Express* gave to the assembly news, the grand reception the Indian President gave in Rashtrapati Bhavan to the assembly delegates and the warm greetings the distinguished Prime Minister of India gave to the assembly in person at one of its plenary sessions. The general impression the assembly had made on an average Indian was clearly expressed by a taxi driver who said, "Never before have there been so many holy men in Delhi at one time." Delhi had a busy time at that particular juncture with the World Industrial Fair going on and the spectacular visit of the Russian astronaut Major Gagarin.

India is predominantly a non-christian country. Only about two and a half percent of its population is Christian. Yet the delegates have not gone to a country which is totally a stranger to Christianity. There is a church in the southernmost corner of India which owes its existence to the Apostle Thomas. European and American missionaries have said of this part of the country that it worshipped the true God while their forefathers worshipped stalks and stones. It is not a mere fable. The distinguished scholar, Dr. Mingana, said, Thomas and India are synonymous. He also said, "No historians, no poet, no breviary, no liturgy and no writer of any kind, who having opportunity of speaking of St. Thomas does



not associate his name with India." (Early Spread of Christian in India. P. 61) There are churches here still existing which are a thousand years old. Nearly one fourth of the population of this country is also Christian. From very ancient times the chief connection of the church was with the Persian Church, whose missionary activities were second to none in the whole history of Christendom. Most of the early missionaries who came here were from the Catholicate of Seluscia-Ctesephone, which antedates even the Council of Nicea. There exists even today a Persian cross with Pahlavi inscriptions which is more than 1200 years old. The twenty and odd Eastern prelates who came here after the Third Assembly must have been impressed by the antiquity of the church and its hallowed associations. The extent of the Christian ETHOS developed in this country is not inferior to the ones prevailing in Rome, Constantinople or Athens, though Indian Christianity could not spread so widely as in Italy or Greece. Some recent foreign visitors to this country have clearly given expression to this.

The New Delhi Assembly was a prodigious undertaking. It had 577 delegates, 49 observers, 55 fraternal delegates, 100 youth participants, 120 guests, 165 advisers, and 350 representatives of press, cinema, television etc. To add to it there were 200 staff members making a total of 1600. Some 10 representatives from E. Germany were not allowed to participate. Some 30 and odd representatives of the International Missionary Council were unable to attend. The Billy Graham party left after one week with the complaint that it lacked vitality. The assembly also has not been without antidemonstrators. A lean, ascetic Indian Christian in protest fasted outside the Vijayan Bhavan, who was removed by the police, while the fleshy Carl McIntire criticised the council inside. It is these gentlemen who started the International Council of Churches as a rival to the World Council of Churches and lends support to the Evangelical Group in the Mar Thoma Church which was declined membership in the WCC.

Huge as the assembly had been, its achievements were also not of any mean order. The World Council started in Amsterdam in 1948 is now only 13 years old. But its growth had been phenomenal. At Amsterdam the membership was 151, at Evanston it rose to 163 and at New Delhi it was 197. Amsterdam saw the birth of a child with all its pain and pang. At Evanston the child was confirmed with all the adolescent uncertainty confusion and awkwardness. New Delhi saw a wedding. It was the wedding of the World Council and the International Missionary council, which was the greatest event of New Delhi after years of collaboration. Bishop Newbigin says in his preliminary address, "These two world organizations were not strangers to each other. Both were products of World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. To accomplish its mission IMC had to seek unity; to achieve its unity the WCC had to

incorporate mission. If the integration of these two bodies was not predestined, it was at least imperative."

The second great achievement of New Delhi was the acceptance of 23 churches as new members, which increased the membership from 163 to 197. At Amsterdam the major Christian bodies remained outside the council: the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church of Russia, and the Southern Baptist Convention in U. S. A. At New Delhi the R. C. Church sent 5 official observers. They could neither speak in sessions nor vote but they were present by the invitation of the council and by the appointment from the Vatican. At New Delhi the Russian Orthodox Church became a member of the council bringing with it not only its own estimated 50 million members but also the other iron curtain churches of Bulgaria with 5,963,000 members, Rumania with 13 mill. members, and Poland with 4 mill. members. The Southern Baptist Convention in USA remains still outside and sent no observers to N. D.

Selection to membership of the Russian Church was a matter of great concern to members. In recommending the Russian Church the General Secretary said, that absolute priority should be given to the question, "How can the cause of Christ and in particular the cause of Christian unity be served best." Election to membership in the council required a two third vote of member churches represented in the assembly. The Orthodox Church of Russia received 142 affirmative votes out of a possible 149. There were three votes against and 4 abstentions. Among them were Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of N. America and the Hungarian Reformed Church in America. After the election the representatives of three or four churches spoke and they made clear that their votes had no political implications but of purely a religious nature. Dr. Carson Eugene Blake of U. S. A. wrote home that the WC would have betrayed its religious nature if it had rejected the Russian Church for political reason. Mr. Parlin also of U. S. and at present a member of the presidium also said that the WC is a religious body and that applications for membership are judged on the basis of religious belief—acceptance of Jesus Christ as God and saviour.

The addition of the Russian Orthodox Church in the WC with 72 mill. people shifted the Centre of WC's membership from the west towards the east. The churches of Europe and N. America with 21 votes for each continent still have a majority in the central committee. But the Eastern Orthodox Church with 17 members in the central committee constitutes the largest sectional segment in the committee. Asia has 13 and Africa 9. With the shifting of the centre to the east the council began to break away from its Anglican-Protestant anchorage to the Orthodox. It must have been due to the gaining of this strength that Archbishop Iakov of the Greek Orthodox Church and a member of the presidium declared that hereafter

the Orthodox delegation would drop publishing separate statements unless it becomes an absolute necessity.

Another noteworthy feature of the assembly was the revision of the basis. Prior to New Delhi the basis read, "The WC is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." The revised basis runs, "The WCC is a fellowship of churches which confess Lord Jesus Christ as God and saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and the H. Spirit." This basis was passed with 383 voting for, 35 against and 7 abstention, far exceeding the 2/3 majority.

The question of one table for all the baptised Christians was always before the WCC, though it could not be carried out. There are churches in the WC which strongly believe that communion is not the means for church unity but the end of reunion. At Evanston in the St. Mark's Episcopal church an open communion service was held, which was opposed by the Episcopalians themselves. The young people's conference at Lausanne in 1960 openly declared that it was a scandal that in ecumenical gatherings all could not take part of the same table. The challenge from young people was repeated by 160 youth participants in New Delhi. The distinct position taken up by the WCC in inter-communion was an affair of the individual churches and not of the WCC. The WCC would only be betraying its trust if it dabbled in individual church affairs. There was an open communion service at New Delhi under the auspices of the Church of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon. No delegate was forbidden to participate in the communion, but many could not find their way to do so.

The Liturgy of St. James reputed to be the most ancient of Liturgies was celebrated for the entire Assembly by His Grace the Most Rev. Mar Dionysios, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar, in the shamiana which was generally attended. The *Kiss of Peace* passed by the celebrant was participated by the whole congregation, quite symbolic of a state of affair that should prevail. The other common services for the assembly were conducted by the Church of S. India, the Lutheran Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.

The WCC has though 197 constituent churches the expenses are chiefly met by the American and European churches. The new budget voted at New Delhi is for \$ 1,779,200. At Amsterdam in 1948 it was \$ 265,770 and at Evanston \$ 441,000. This does not include \$ 1,106,000 spent for Interchurch Aid and Service for Refugees and \$ 201,150 spent for World Mission and Evangelism. Work on the new headquarters is in progress costing \$ 2,700,000. Nearly 6/7 of the amount is already raised by a committee under the able chairmanship of the Most Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill, the former

Presiding Bishop of the American Episcopal Church. The building will have 250 office rooms and will be shared by the Lutheran federation and the World Presbyterian Alliance. It will be located near the UN buildings and the headquarters of the other world organizations in Geneva. The all too well known 17 route de Malangou will be left by the middle of 1963.

The Ecumenical Movement really moves is a fact. The Roman Catholic Church has not yet accepted membership in the council. Yet it is taking a growing interest in it is attested by several facts. At New Delhi five observers came by the direct appointment of the Vatican. The amount of literature produced by the R. C. C. on WCC is really prodigious. The General Secretary, Dr. Hooft, observed, that it is so numerous that it is even difficult to keep track of it. Those who are in touch with *Unitas, Eastern Churches Quarterly, Irenikon, Das Correspondents* know this full well. Over and above all these the summoning of an Ecumenical Council by Pope John XXIII is a further proof of the strong impact made by the WCC on the Church of Rome. Had it not been for the WC the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other heads of the various Protestant churches would not have visited the Pope and carried on friendly conversations with him. These are all signs of the momentum the WCC has so happily created.

The WCC really moves. An organization which was fundamentally Protestant has now a substantial Orthodox membership almost tending to a majority. With the joining of the Russian Orthodox Church with 72 millions of people, the Orthodox element in the WC has become very significant. In the Central Comm. the Orthodox with 17 members has become the largest single segment in the committee. The European and N. American membership dropped from 22 to 21. People have begun to realise the Ecumenical Movement which was fundamentally a western enterprise has begun to move eastward. *The Christian Century* of U. S. A said, "The council breaks away from its Anglican-Protestant anchorage and swings farther towards the Orthodox orbit." "The voice of Orthodoxy will from now on sound perhaps decisively in all WC affairs." Really the movement moves outward, eastward, and inward. The reports on Unity, Witness and Service evidence this fact. Space does not allow to go into these separately.

Apart from all the theological, official business the assembly transacted the outstanding achievement of the assembly is the personal, private contacts that have been established, which will more than anything else bring the churches together. Love can cover the numerous theological gulfs that exist between the churches. Is it not a wonder to see the Salvation Army, Baptist, Disciple, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Anglican and Orthodox sit together, move together, discuss together, pray together and even worship together as

members of one family. How patiently in sectional and plenary sessions the views of each were patiently listened to by others. The women's ordination advanced by a Salvation Army Colonel was listened to with as much patience by an Orthodox as the Trinitarian formula advanced by them was listened to by the others. The mutual give and take that has been developed from Amsterdam to New Delhi is remarkable. It is an achievement which augurs well for the future. How much of the old prejudices have been got over by such contacts. Doctrines and practices have a lot to do with church reunion, but without overcoming simple prejudices nothing valuable can be attained in the more difficult realm of doctrine. In this context we have to think seriously if it is wise to reduce the size of the assembly. The assembly is a very periodical thing and when it meets as many should be given the opportunity to come together and get to know each other. Hugeness of number may adversely affect the business transaction but its value in other realms is beyond our comprehension.

Before concluding this article a word may be said about the value of the contacts delegates have been able to establish after the termination of the assembly. In this connection notice has to be taken of the visit of the Eastern Church delegates numbering about 22 to the Syrian Church of Malabar. Those who visited were from the Russian, Greek, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Coptic and the Ethiopian churches. They were given a great welcome wherever they went, not only by Christians but even by Hindus and Moslems. Perhaps for the first time the Greek, Russian, Coptic and Ethiopian Liturgies were celebrated here and the people had the chance to see them. Since the Council Chalcedon in 451 this is the first time that the members of these divided churches get together in such close contact. They not only met together but worshipped together. At last people have begun to realize that the chasms that existed between them are not anything that cannot be bridged. There is no gulf which God cannot bridge and let us pray that the wound in the Body of Christ be healed at the earliest that our witness may be more effective in a world that is fast gravitating away from Him. The New Delhi Assembly has made memories which cannot soon be forgotten.

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## CHRISTIANITY IN KURDISTAN

*President Silvis Uan ROOY, International Society Kurdistan,  
Amsterdam.*

Like all West Asia (of which it forms the mountainous heart) Kurdistan is a country at the cross-roads of world history since times immemorial. And so it is from a religious point of view. Among its neighbours in the Caucasian North

there is Armenia, oldest Christian country in the world and in the South, Kurdistan is bordering on the Arabs, the bearers of Islam in two continents.

Since centuries, Kurdistan is a predominantly Sunnite Moslem country but there are several educated (non-christian Kurds) who believe it would have been better if the Christian Gospel had won Kurds instead of the Qoran. Most foreign observers agree that Islam has not too deep roots among Kurds and the latter are very proud of what they call the Kurdish tradition of tolerance. As among other nations of the Iranian family (Persians, Pushtu, Tajiks etc.) Kurds preserve many a custom of old Aryan (Iranian) paganism. The most important day of the Kurdish year is Newroz. This is New Year, the Beginning of Spring and the National Day all at the same time.

The Kurds claim to be descendants of the ancient Medes and the Mukri dialect in Persian Kurdistan is indeed still very akin to the language of the old Medes. Zoroastrianism seems to have been common among the proto-Kurds and Zoroaster (Zerdest in Kurdish) is said to have been born in the Mukri area. The "Parthians and Medes and Elamites" mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles II, 9 who came to Jerusalem to hear the Gospel can safely be considered as the ancestors of present Kurds. According to the legend, the Apostle Thomas was the first of Jesus' disciples to carry the Gospel into Kurdistan itself. It was Addai who later came to St Thomas assistance and Addai was followed by Mari who preached between the river Tigris and the little Zab and had Erbil as his centre of operations. (Erbil = ancient Arbela is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world and was within the scene of the Kurdish-Qassimist war this summer).

The plain of Erbil, with its citadel-like capital, was an ancient seat of kings and at Shahrkert, between Dakouka and Erbil, Mar Mari of Ourfa (who died 226) converted a monarch and his people "who worshipped trees and sacrificed to an image of copper." Seleukia-Ctesiphon, later the famous seat of the Catholicos of the East, was already an important Christian centre in the third century. The next century brought a terrible persecution of Christians under Sapor II (309-363). Those "Persian Martyrs" as they are generally referred to, came from practically all parts of what is now called Kurdistan. After a thorough reorganisation of the Nestorian bishoprics etc. in Kurdistan, many of the latter were represented in Seleukia in 410. In spite of renewed persecutions of Kurdish Christians shortly after that (under Behram V, 420-440) Mar Saba succeeded in converting Kurdish sun-worshippers. In 486, a year after Mar Saba's death, Patriarch Acacy convened the

Synod at Beit-Adhr'e, later on the seat of famous Kurdish Yezidi emirs.

Kurdistan, like West-Asia and the Orient in general, also contributed to Christian monasticism. Many later patriarchs were monks first. Religious research was also done in Nestorian Kurdistan, including research on surrounding religions. So Aba I, Patriarch 540-552, wrote an essay on the matrimonial customs of the Zoroastrians. It was the Zeal to convert non-Christians that-as has often been the case-gave birth to the study of other beliefs. As in Turkistan, that vast country in the heart of the Eurasian continent, flourishing Nestorian christendom suffered incredibly from the conquests of the great Timur (= Tamer-lane, 1335-1402). Numerically, the main victims of this Islamic Turkistan ruler were neighbouring Moslem nations. Only very few monasteries are still left in present-day Kurdistan and Christians (Nestorians and Syrio-Chaldeans) are a very small minority only among Kurds nowadays.

In 1514, most of Kurdistan was conquered by the Osmanli Turks who gradually crushed the feudal petty states of Kurdistan. Foremost among them was the principality of Bohtan, which existed from 837-1848. Three years before its foundation, the oldest now known Kurdish literary document was written and Bitlis, capital of Botan (now a city in Turkish Kurdistan still) became famous through "Sheref-Nameh," work of Sheref-Khan (of Bitlis) in 1596.

Russian expansion into the Caucasus and Western antagonism to the Islamic Ottoman empire awakened European interest in the Christians under Moslem rule, especially those under the Turks. Consequently Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy, in the 18th and 19th century especially, rediscovered, though slowly, the remainders of the once flourishing Nestorian Christian church in Kurdistan too.

Armenians, the Kurds' northern neighbours who remained both Christians and patriots in spite of many catastrophes, often served as intermediaries. Before World War I, the Kurdish and the Armenian ethnic areas on Turkish territory were intermingled to a very high degree and even to-day the Armenian Socialist Soviet Republic has the largest of the small Kurdish enclaves in the USSR. (Arrarat, the mountain on which Noah's arc is said to have stranded, is still especially dear as Kurds and Armenians). In the Vatican it was the "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" who tried to develop the first Latin alphabet for the Kurdish language and it were Italian Dominican fathers who wrote the first European "area study" of Kurdistan (1818) and the first Western-language text book of Kurdish (178). Protestant interest in Kurdistan set in with the development

of the Bible Societies. The oldest Kurdish translation of a Bible section was printed in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1856 by the "British and Foreign Bible Society." It was the Gospel of St Mathew, translated by an Armenian called Stephan, who had been employed by American missionaries in Diarbekir. Printing was done in the Armenian alphabet and next year, all the four Gospels were published the same way.

In 1872, the "American Bible Society" published the N. T. in full, again in Istanbul and American sponsored Kurdish translations of the New Testaments or parts of it in Armenian characters continued till 1914. In Persian Kurdistan, British-sponsored (Mukri and Kermanshahi dialect) translations of Bible sections appeared between 1894-1919. The latest one was done by a Lutheran missionary of Norwegian descent, the American Dr I. O. Fossum. He also wrote a Kurdish Grammar and a Kurdish songbook. The latter contained the first endeavour to create a Kurdish national anthem, written to the tune of "Onward Christian soldiers." Some of Fossum's group stayed in Persian Kurdistan and it was from one of them that the late President of the "Autonomous Kurdish Republic of Mehabad" (1945-46), Ghazi Mohammed, learnt English. Ghazi Mohammed was the Supreme Islamic Religious Judge of all Persian Kurdistan and later on hanged by the Persians because of "separatism." The same "Lutheran Orient Mission" of Minneapolis that sent out Dr. Fossum is now planning to work in Persian Kurdistan again.

After World War one, which resulted in a further partition of both Kurdistan and West-Asia as a whole, the first Kurdish Bible section translations in Arabic characters appeared. BFBS and ABs printed St Luke's and St John's Gospel in it in co-operation. This was in 1919. Three years later Rev. Riggs brought the Mathew's, and Mark's Gospels in Kurdish, Arabic script, in 1923 that of St Luke.

A Latin-transcribed translation of a Bible part followed only after World War II. In the later twenties, Jeladet Bedir-Khan (of the ousted royal family of Botan) had developed a Latin transcription for Kurdish, very similar to the Kemal Ataturk introduced for Osmanli-Turkish, Kurdish being an Iranian (Indo-European) language, can be written better in Latin (or Cyrillic) characters than in Arabic ones. Now a Latin and an Arab transcription are competing for nation-wide use in Kurdistan, as are the Kurmanji dialect (spoken by 60% of the Kurds, mainly those in Turkish-Kurdistan) and the Sorani-dialect (spoken by 9%, mainly the Kurds round Sulaimaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan). Most Bible translations are in Kurmanji. Solomon's Proverbs appeared in Kurmanji-Kurdish under the title "Metheloken Herrete



Sileman" in Beyrouth in 1947 and have been reprinted since then. The translation was made by a non-Christian Kurd and a French professor (Dominican father) and publishing was done by ABS and BFBS together. So there was a real Oikumene.

The Old Testament has never been translated into Kurdish and the plan of publishing a new Kurmanji-Kurdish version (in Latin characters) of the New Testament was recently dropped by the ABS. The ABS is 'editorially responsible' since years for Kurdish Bible translations but after studying the said idea carefully it decided to wait as there is only extremely small demand for Kurdish Bibles.

This indicates much of the situation of Christianity in partitioned Kurdistan to-day. It may be added that Panislamism is against Kurdish patriots. Arab chauvinism is so too. "Peaceful coexistence" of Kurds and Arabs in Iraq and Syria would certainly add to a new climate of tolerance in general, in which Christian activities too could flourish. Modern Kurdish leaders are in favour of linking up their cause with that of small national and religious groups in West-Asia (Armenians, Assyrians and others). It was Thuraya Bedir-Khan, who first organised the Kurdish national movement on modern political lines who came out in favour of cooperating with the Christian Armenians in the twenties. Assyrian-Kurdish relations are good also. In Turkey, where Islamism and anti-clericalism are competing (it is one of the big issues) the situation for Christianity seems to be nearly as disadvantageous as it is for Kurds. In Iran, things are somewhat different. Even to-day, there are still Kurds writing Christian poetry. As far as the writer can judge this movement, chances for Christianity in divided, oppressed and underdeveloped Kurdistan depend greatly on active international Christian solidarity with that unhappy nation as a whole. The Kurds have a fine 'instinct' to feel who is their friend or foe and only people with non-egoistic purposes can approach them without "backthoughts" and win their hearts and minds.

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## THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN INDIA \*

The Rev. Dr. V. C. [SAMUEL, *Serampore College.*

It is a fact of history that Christianity reached India during very early times, and that till the sixteenth century it continued to maintain itself as a branch of Eastern Christendom. However

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\*The writer alone is responsible for the point of view expressed in this article

the community which it perpetuated came subsequently to be divided into several sections, owing allegiance to different ecclesiastical affiliations and loyalties. Among them all the major body that keeps to its eastern character and tradition is the Syrian Orthodox Church. The question, therefore, regarding its task in free India is not without any importance.

For one thing, if Christianity is to be taken as consisting of the three broad divisions of Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy, the first two have a fairly considerable following almost all over India, and it is possible for them to make their respective Christian contributions to the life of the nation. As for the third, the one body through which it can show forth its spiritual dynamism in India is the Syrian Orthodox Church. The work and witness of this ancient Church should therefore awaken interest, not only in the entire eastern Christendom, but also in Christians everywhere who are concerned to see it fulfil its God-given task in the land of its existence.

But there is one difference. Whereas many at the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church or of any one of the major Protestant Churches in the world are very well acquainted with the problems, needs, and opportunities of the Church in India, practically none of the leaders of any one of the eastern Churches outside India know much on the subject. To say this is not to blame any one, but to state the fact, so that it may change. It is gratifying in the present context to take note of the meeting of ecclesiastical representatives of eastern Christendom that has been held in Rhodes during the last week of September. That the conveners of the assembly extended their invitation to the Syrian Orthodox Church in India to send two official visitors is most certainly an important event. Though the gathering at Rhodes may not have devoted much time to discuss the Church in India, it may legitimately be hoped that at similar assemblies of eastern Churches in future this will find a prominent place even on the agenda, and that thus the oversight of a long period of history will be amply rectified.

### **The Church and its Mission**

As regards the task that lies before the Syrian Orthodox Church in India in our times, three areas may be specially mentioned. They are:--(i) the Church in relation to the changing pattern of social, economic and political life of the nation; (ii) the Church in relation to the renaissance of Hinduism; and (iii) the Church in relation to Church union movement in the country.

Of these three areas, the first two have been taken seriously both by the Roman Catholic and by the Protestant Churches in

India. From the time western missionaries of both these ecclesiastical affiliations arrived in the country they have been interested in trying to fulfil their Christian obligations in those areas. To begin with, however, it was the work of missionaries from other lands. This has come to change lately and in our times Indian Christians have begun to take the lead in carrying on the work. Of the several attempts that are being made in this way primarily under Protestant auspices, the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, founded in Bangalore a few years ago, deserves special mention. Many thinking Christians of all Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, have recognised the importance of the Institute and the work which it has so far accomplished.

It has to be admitted that the Syrian Orthodox Church has so far done very little in fulfilling its obligations in the two areas mentioned above. In order to show the gravity of the omission, a few words may be said in the present context to explain these areas.

Since independence India has made great strides in the realm of industrial progress and socio-political spheres. This does and will continue to affect the relation of man with man and one social group with another. The distribution, for instance, of heavy industries in many parts of the country brings in people of all castes, classes and creeds from all over the land, and they form themselves into communities which often transcend traditional restrictions. This new development can find full support in the democratic form of government with its emphasis on secular state and universal adult franchise. In this way the Indian people have begun to enjoy a new sense of individual as well as national freedom, which is bound to result in the formation of new patterns of life in the country. In the face of this fact, the Church in India has the great responsibility of making its existence and spiritual contribution felt on the Indian society.

Equally important is the task of the Church in India in relation to the religious claims of renascent Hinduism. The old religion of this ancient land has had in modern times very able apologists. They have interpreted their faith in the light of contemporary thoughtforms, offering a rational explanation for almost all religious symbols, rites and customs, and have made the claim that the religion of their ancestors is not only as good as any in the world, but that it is the best for India. Moreover, many modern Hindu writers see in Christianity a religion alien to India and one which offers no spiritual ideal or principle that is not already found in Hinduism.

These two developments, as a matter of fact, are, in the opinion of the present writer, clear opportunities for the Church

in India to enhance its area of service. The first, for instance, should be taken advantage of, not merely to carry on educational and social work, but also to explain why the Church is constrained to take interest in running schools, colleges and hospitals, or carrying on social service. This is specially relevant, because there is a rather widespread tendency among many educated Hindus to insist that Christianity should confine itself to social and educational work, without at all including evangelistic campaigns in its programme of activity. Since it comes from the Hindu emphasis that Hinduism is an all sufficient religion which is being misrepresented by Christians, it is necessary for the Church to make clear its faith: the Church should explain to the Hindu the spiritual basis of its social action. Needless to say, it is by meeting problems of this kind that Christianity will be able in India to expound its faith in relation to society.

Furthermore, when once the Church opens its eyes to see these avenues of creative work, it will realise the need for trying to solve social and economic problems that are there in its own community. The Christian community, for example, is not above criticism in regard to its handling of economic disparities and social evils of various kinds found within itself. These should not have been there at all, but they are there and most certainly need solution; a sense of responsibility towards the world outside will give a deeper awareness of them. In any case, a neglect on the part of the Church in India to take seriously its task in the social, economic, and political spheres will leave it behind other communities to maintain itself an isolated and closed group—a position which is opposed to the very nature of the Church in the Christian faith.

The problem raised by renascent Hinduism helps the Church in India in another way. The emphasis, for instance, made by modern Hindu apologists that Hinduism comprehends all spiritual ideals and principles ever known to man, or that Christianity does not include anything of ultimate meaning and significance which Hinduism does not already contain, is an occasion for the Christian to make clear his faith to the Hindu. However, this can be fruitfully undertaken only on the ground of an objective study of both classical and modern Hinduism by the Christian who, on his part, has a clear grasp of the Church's faith.

What is described here is not anything peculiar to India. As a matter of fact, Christianity does not exist anywhere in the world, whether in Europe or America, Russia or the Middle East, without being challenged in one way or another by the world outside. In all these places the Church has, according as the anomalies of history would permit it, to work out ways and means of communicating the faith,

### Cooperation with other Churches

As already noted, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches in India have done a great deal of work in the two areas referred to above. There is, in fact, no need for the Syrian Orthodox Church to duplicate what has already been accomplished. On the contrary, it can avail itself of the fruits of their labours. Now it is pertinent to ask, Can the Syrian Orthodox Church cooperate with members of these two ecclesiastical bodies in trying to fulfil its task in the two areas? It must be added at the outset that experience has shown that cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church is not quite feasible for the Syrian Church. What, then, about the Protestant Churches?

The Syrian Orthodox Church is a member of the World Council of Churches, in which Protestant, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches are members. Cooperation, therefore, with Protestant Churches is not against the principles of this ancient Church. There is nothing un-Eastern or un-Orthodox about it has sufficiently been shown by the fact that most of eastern Christendom has already accepted membership in the World Council. In this context it is gratifying that the Russian Orthodox Church has applied for membership in the World Council and will most probably be accepted in that capacity at the New Delhi Assembly. In other words cooperation with Protestant Churches is not a matter on which Eastern Orthodox would raise objection.

Unfortunately, the experience of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India with Churches from the west has not always been cordial. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, began sending out missionaries to the Malabar Coast from the sixteenth century. From that time to this very day that Church has done everything in its power to hamper the growth of this Church. In the nineteenth century, though the Syrian Church welcomed the Anglican missionaries sent to it by the Church Missionary Society and maintained very good relation with them for about quarter of a century, subsequently they broke with each other. This led to the division of the then existing Syrian Christian community into three bodies. Ever since this incident the Syrian Orthodox Church has been on the whole reticent to enter into relationship with almost any Christian body in the world.

This attitude on its part has often been taken amiss by members of Protestant Churches. But more seriously than the misunderstanding its effect on the Church itself as also on the wider Christian cause to be represented in the country should be taken into account. India, for instance, stands undoubtedly in need of the unstinting labours as much of this ancient Church as of all the others in the country; and by being isolated from bodies that are engaged in evangelistic works of various kinds, without at the same time having

a programme of its own for this service, the Church is not likely not to lose by and by a great deal of its Christian vitality and concern in these matters.

The isolationist tendency of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the lack of a missionary programme have other implications. It is, in fact, the entire eastern Christendom that is, by this state of affairs, sustaining the loss of a great opportunity. For, as already observed, the only body in India through which the eastern ecclesiastical tradition has the possibility of showing forth to the world in a concrete way its vision of the Church and the way in which it would carry on its mission. This last point becomes all the more poignant in the face of the fact that apologists for extreme conservatism in the Church have often endeavoured to defend themselves by asserting that theirs is the eastern and the orthodox view of things. Whether this is so or not, the fact remains that the other eastern Churches have a share of responsibility in the matter of guiding this Church. From this point of view one may express the hope that in future questions of this kind relating to the Church in India will engage the serious attention of ecclesiastical gatherings of the eastern Churches.

#### **The Church in Relation to Union Movements**

Christianity in India deserves to be credited with two achievements in the realm of Church union. In the first place, the major Protestant bodies in the south, namely the Anglican, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, and the Congregationalist, have formed themselves into a united Church known as the Church of South India. Secondly, a similar scheme is under way in the north, where negotiations are progressing satisfactorily towards the realisation of a union of the various Protestant Churches found in those regions. When the latter achieves the anticipated goal, the two united Church bodies will most certainly recognise each other as branches of one Church in India.

Behind these two union movements there lies a recognition on the part of the Church bodies involved in them that the call to evangelism is the primary task of Christ's Church; that division in Christendom, on the one hand contradicts the nature of the Church, and on the other offer a far-reaching hindrance in the fulfilment of its missionary obligation; and that therefore the Church in India should not perpetuate them any longer. It is assumed by them that on all occasions of schism there must have been at play both theological and non-theological factors. Of these two, the latter, so they believe, is not to be considered binding on the Church in India, for the simple reason that it had no part in those schisms or in the doctrinal controversies raged in the Church in the past, and that therefore the non-theological factors which divided one Christian body from another cannot be real to it. On the other hand, they maintain that if the Church in India accepts the historic faith of the

Church and carried on its mission, without being led by prejudice inherited from other parts of Christendom, it will be able, as the Holy Spirit guides it, to realise a union, so rich in content as to offer Church union movements anywhere in the world a healthy guidance or at least a sound example.

Whether all this defense of the union movements in India is to be accepted or not, it is correct to say that their significance can on no account be explained away. In fact, it is true of schisms and doctrinal controversies of Christendom that they took place as much without the involvement in them of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India as without that of any other Christian body in the country. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to expect this ancient Indian Church to rise above a great deal of the hatred and prejudice that have marred the relationship between divided Christian bodies both in the east and in the west.

The last sentence should be underlined, bearing in mind at the same time that the Syrian Orthodox Church has its own prejudices against other Christian bodies. However, if it does, as the Holy Spirit guides it, get over them, it may prove a means in the hands of God to lead the way to union of Christendom, by which Churches of the east and the west will come together.

What is meant here may be explained in a few words. In the Indian context, whether they realise it now or not, the Churches have to work together in areas of common concern. From such cooperation there can emerge an atmosphere of deeper mutual understanding, appreciation, and wanting to stay together. According as the Holy Spirit directs, an atmosphere of this kind will enable the Churches to seek a more abiding basis for staying and working together. If and when this experience of being together leads them to a union in which no principle has been sacrificed, it will be something worth having. Union of the Churches is the work, not of man, but of God. It can never be forced on any Church, but if the various bodies work together, they will be able to move towards a union which will be acceptable to them all.

There is one thing to be noted in this connection. The Church of South India today is not a Protestant body of any description known to west; neither will the Church of North India be when it comes to be formed. If in its cooperation with these bodies, the Syrian Orthodox Church conserves its theological and ecclesiastical principles, the union between the two traditions, if it comes into being at all, will produce an ecclesiastical body that is qualitatively different from either the Church of South India or the Church of North India as it is going to be formed.

This may be conceived as possible on the ground that the Syrian Orthodox Church believes its faith to be essentially the historic faith

of the Church Universal, and that the Protestant Churches claim for the Reformation that it only restored the uncorrupt in the Churches. However, it has to be granted that, like the rest of eastern Christendom, the Syrian Christianity has also been subject to influences of various kinds from the world outside. Therefore, one thing is certain; everything that is found in the Orthodox Syrian Church in India or in any other eastern Church is not part and parcel of the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. The same must be said about the Protestant Churches also. Although the reformers claimed to have restored the historic faith in its purity, it is a fact that they had drunk deep from the fountain of the Renaissance and the Scholastic metaphysics, so that the faith as they taught was not so pure as they endeavoured to make out. Protestant Churches after them have not existed in the world without being influenced by forces of different kinds.

The two traditions can therefore, if they so decide, come together in India, and, in the providence of God, arrive at a union which will be more Indian than any so far achieved and also more representative of the Church Universal. A movement of this kind, if initiated, will not stop with India or with the Syrian and the protestant ecclesiastical traditions. It may be reasonably hoped that at one stage the Roman Catholic Church will join in, and thus the resulting union will be a blessing to the Church as a whole.

#### **A Word of Conclusion**

The Syrian Orthodox Church in India has before it great possibilities. They will be realised in the providence of God only if the Church begins to fulfil its responsibilities. This article is written with a very deep concern to see the Church do it.

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### **PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S SPEECH AT THE WORLD ASSEMBLY**

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India commended delegates to the World Council of Churches' Third Assembly for bringing religious insights to bear on current international problems.

In a 20 minute address at the plenary session December 4, he advised them to contribute toward peace by encouraging their people and governments to follow "the friendly approach" instead of aggravating "the war psychosis".

The Indian statesman expressed confidence that what the Assembly had to say about the problems of the day would "exercise influence over large numbers of people in the world".



He said that "apart from the problems themselves - their merits and demerits - what has troubled many of us here has been the... cold war approach" to these problems.

"We have to take steps to protect our country or whatever we consider right and important", Mr. Nehru stated. "Nevertheless there seems to be no reason why, in trying to protect them, we should be offensive to each other and use language which infuriates each other."

"The cold war is mainly the use of language in word or writing which is annoying, infuriating, to the other party. If we seek peace we must adopt in some measure the ways of peace, a peaceful approach."

"This should not mean, and cannot mean, the giving up of any vital thing the people consider important, but it does mean putting forward even that vital matter in a peaceful way."

"I have learned that what you give to others, you get in return", he said. "If you give a friendly approach, you get some kind of friendly return."

The Prime Minister drew laughter from the Assembly when he contrasted "men of religion" or "saints" with politicians. Of the former, he said, "will stick to the truth as he sees it, regardless of consequences".

"Saints are supposed to be that way, and they become martyrs because of it. But politicians - however great they may be - are not normally martyrs.....They are constantly inclined to compromise."

Mr. Nehru said that "it is difficult for.....leaders chosen by democratic societies to express as they ought, their own frank opinion about matters of moment which affect their problems". He noted that the alternative is "to reflect merely the opinion of the masses".

In the case politicians, he acknowledged, "obviously - normally speaking - some middle way is followed".

He explained also that "by the mere fact of the democratic process, they are constantly inclined to compromise.....But once you begin compromising, it is a slippery path."

## UNITY OF THE CHURCH

H. G. The Most Rev. MICHAEL RAMSEY,  
*Archbishop of Canterbury.*

Dr. Ramsey noted that the world's criticism of the Church "must rightly humble us," but added that Christians should not "accept the world's conception of the matter".

"The world does not hear the call to holiness, and does not care for the truth in Christ," the archbishop said, pointing out that both holiness and truth are integrally related to unity in the Bible.

"But the world has its own care for unity, albeit conceived in a secular way," he said. "It desires that men and nations shall be joined to each other and the forces which separate them removed.

"It is not just unity—togetherness with one another—that we seek.....," he continued. "It is for unity in truth and holiness that we work and pray, for that is Christ's super-natural gift to us. Let that always be made clear.

"A movement which concentrates on unity as an isolated concept can mislead us, as indeed would a movement which had the exclusive label of holiness or the exclusive label of truth".

Dr. Ramsey noted that the quest for unity involves the ascetical as well as the intellectual and the diplomatic and ethical. It further involves the negotiation of the union of the churches, and of bringing the churches into practical fellowship," he added.

"It includes the task within them all, of learning the truth in Christ, in Scripture, in the Fathers, in the liturgies in contemporary scholarship, in self-criticism of systems and formulations, a task in which we have been finding ourselves, thank God, rather less like rivals and rather more like fellow-learners," he said.

The Anglican primate pointed out that unity also involves acting in Christian conscience so that the Church has a voice and an impact, ministering to the homeless and hungry, and being consecrated to Christ.

"Because our task is such," he said, "it has both a divine urgency and a divine patience.

"Yet as the way of holiness cannot be hurried, and the way of truth cannot be hurried, so too there is concerning unity a divine patience," he remarked. "Guarding ourselves against confusing divine patience and our human sloth, we know that there is a divine patience, to be imitated in our patience with others, in our patience with ourselves, and in our patience with God's age-long patience".

Dr. Ramsey stressed that theology plays an important role within the total task of the Church. He pointed out that a spirit of "hang

theology" has developed because of the schisms with theology being created in both the East and West in the past.

However, he warned that those who insist that just "a few simple facts and principles" are needed to achieve unity "commonly make large theological assumptions which they do not pause to examine".

"Beware of them," he urged. "For if the East cannot find unity in the confessional systems which the West brought to it in an earlier epoch, no more will it find unity in any 20th Century simplifications."

"Is not the need for West and East to discover those gifts of God which authentically belong not to any one age or phase of culture or continent, but to the one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church of Christ, and to receive them not indeed as a return to an past age but as the media of Christ's dynamic power for the present and the future?" he asked.

Dr. Ramsey noted that "two good things" are happening in the realm of theology. Within every church, theologians are being inspired by the same interests and are using the same tools," he said, and "within our different traditions there is a tendency to pay more and more emphasis upon the mystery of God's gracious action bringing a deeper humility in men's view of truth and its reception."

"If we will be patient, true theology, good theology, is something which unites," he assured. "But it will not be true unless it keeps itself and us near to the Cross whence the call to holiness comes."

## THE IMPRESSIONS OF NEW DELHI ASSEMBLY

The 3rd assembly cannot be judged only by what was formulated there. There are a number of "unexpected by-products" of the gathering of representatives of 198 Protestant and Orthodox Churches in India.

He cited the first, big confrontation of "some of the oldest churches in Christendom with some of the youngest." The Orthodox Churches from Russia and young churches from Asia and Africa had come to feel they must get closer because, "they represent Christian minorities surrounded by strongly non-Christian environments." The ecumenical movement is showing greater maturity than at its two previous assemblies. There was far stronger and more effective Asian and African voices in the council than ever before. These young churches are no longer

little minorities in corners but making themselves heard and felt both in committees and Assembly.

—Dr. VISSER'T HOOFT.

The Assembly had been characterised by a quiet determination to go and do something, about things talked about here and at previous assemblies. The presence of the Orthodox had strengthened the voice of the younger churches.

—Dr. D. T. NILES.

The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Delhi has added substance to the aspiration of its title. The entry of the Russian Orthodox Church and its sisters in Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania has had two stimulating effects. (1) Only now is the Christian witness in communist countries strongly represented, (2) Although Roman Catholics are no more than observers, the charge of pan-Protestantism loses its validity.

—THE TIMES, LONDON.

"This movement has now brought the Russian church into its orbit. Here at Delhi their delegation of sixteen were received with muted, but obviously sincere, welcome. They are to take part in the life and work of the World Council particularly in questions of faith and unity, but the message from Moscow did not exclude participation in social and economic questions. It remains to be seen whether this young Council will be able to carry the weight of Orthodoxy that has now shifted the balance of the Council's life from Europe and America to the Middle East and Asia. No longer can it be accused of being a pan-Protestant movement financed by the churches of the US."

—THE ECONOMIST, LONDON.

"There can be little doubt that unity is a long way off. But there can be no doubt either about the Church's desire to assist separated brethren in finding the fullness of revelation and the divine certitude of faith and morals in removing the historical and theological misconceptions regarding the Catholic Church's power and authority in teaching. For that reason we recommend to all the faithful prayers for the success of the New Delhi Assembly that the Holy Spirit will enlighten the conference and its leaders to see the plan which Christ gave the world."

—CATHOLIC FREE PRESS, U. S. A.

## THE VOICE OF CHRISTENDOM

Speaking at the Pan-Orthodox conference at Rhodospoli, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Philippi said:—

All churches must cooperate in the spirit of fellowship. Christianity is to deal effectively with the crisis of secularism, paganism and materialism in the world today. At this turning moment of history the church must find new ways to go out into the world with the offer of salvation. It must proclaim the message from housetop and have no fear of those who destroy the body, but not the soul.

Directing his remarks to observers from the Anglican, the old Catholic churches and the WCC, the octogenarian Bishop said, "We acknowledge your many blessed actions, your sincere striving for dogmatic truth according to the will of God and your work to reach a positive basis for unity by removing the unjust calumnies against the Orthodox Church." Perhaps the greatest danger within the church who blackens its name are seeking to compensate for their own spiritual emptiness. The church, Christians in it, must guard against being twisted into a form of derogation, of which we have altogether too much. There are voices within the Church which cry that the church is mediocre, irrelevant, offering what nobody wants. They call it prim, prosaic and dull. From their description you might think that the church is unstruck, falling to pieces.

—MET. CHRYSOSTOM

Slick man, supercilious woman, superficial youth may pretend that the church is irrelevant but underneath the bluff and pretense, the glitter, the wistfulness, the cavernous hunger, they are secretly groping for an unknown God. All this is but a compensation for their own spiritual emptiness. Asserting that those leaders who do not know God of true religion are instruments to gain their own ends. It is no accident that tyrants and dictators begin by trying to cut off the people from God you can't treat people like dirt unless they believe they are dirt. So long as they believe themselves sons of God they are men.

—DR. F. C. FRY.

*(Editorial continued)*

## **THE RT. REV. BISHOP LAKDAS A DE MEL ELECTED AS THE METROPOLITAN OF INDIA**

We note with great happiness the election of Bishop De Mel as the Metropolitan of India. He is a great friend and well-wisher of the Syrian Church and he has more than once visited Malabar. Last year he was to have come here as the leader of the annual Syrian Student Conference but for political reasons he abandoned the visit. His elevation to the Metropolitanate of India would strengthen the time honoured bond between Lanka and India.

Bishop De Mel, who is 60 is already well known in Anglican and ecumenical circles. His father was Sir Henry de Mel, a wealthy politician and industrialist. The Bishop went from Keble College, Oxford to Cuddesdon and he served as a curate of Bishop Howe Browne at St. John the Divine, Kennington. In 1945 he was consecrated as the assistant of Bishop Horsey of Colombo. He was the first Sinhalese priest to become a bishop. Five years later the diocese was divided and he became the Bishop of Kurnagula. At the last New Delhi Assembly he was the Director of the Information Service which he so ably managed. We wish the new Metropolitan all success and pray that he may be a worthy successor to a long line of very able and devoted Metropolitans.

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## **HERE AND THERE IN CHRISTENDOM**

**America.** 13 Episcopal clergymen had been jailed in Mississippi for their desegregation efforts.

The House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church has unanimously elected Dr. Clifford Morehouse, a New York book publisher, to succeed Canon Theodore Weidel of Washington, president since 1952.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of N. and S. America has announced the creation of a Department of Laity to coordinate relationships between the church and the laity. A clergyman and a lay man have been named directors.

45 clergymen of major Protestant denominations in the U. S. have attended a three day retreat at the Marydale Retreat House of the Roman Catholic Church.

**Egypt.** According to a new Vatican decree Roman Catholics in Egypt will celebrate church festivals which fall during the week on the following Sunday as under the present condition in Egypt, it is impossible to celebrate festivals on week days.

**England.** Dr. F. D. Coggan has been enthroned as the 88th Archbishop of York.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales has established a committee for fostering unity among Christians in England under the chairmanship of Dr. J. C. Heenan, Archbishop of Liverpool.

**France.** 40 French Roman Catholic priests recently spent three days studying the doctrinal aspects of ecumenism at the R. C. unity centre at Lyons.

**Geneva.** Several cables and letters have been sent to the WCC headquarters by Orthodox leaders on the occasion of the celebration of the Orthodox Easter.

**Greece.** The theological students of Athens and Salonika Universities are on strike for the last few months to protest against a new Board of Education programme which drastically cuts the number of hours devoted to religious instruction in schools. They also claim a religious renaissance in Greece.

**India.** A plan which should make religious instruction compulsory in all public schools and colleges in Bihar State has been proposed by the state's government.

A bill restricting missionary activities among the hill tribes was introduced into Madhyapradesh State Assembly.

**Indonesia.** A Christian has served as the acting president of the Republic of Indonesia during President Sukarno's recent absence.

**Istanbul.** Archbishop Ramsey has recently paid a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. They have agreed to set up a joint commission to study the difference in doctrine between their two churches.

The Ecumenical Patriarch has recognized the Bulgarian Patriarch who had asked pardon for the wrong he had done in 1953.

**Jerusalem.** The British school of archaeology has unearthed ancient city walls, believed to be the site of the earliest Jerusalem.

of the Canaanite period. The wall is believed to be part of the city captured by David, 1000 years before Christ.

Ninety Protestants and Roman Catholics from Europe and the U. S. took part in the second ecumenical Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land, led by two French Dominican priests and two pastors of the French Reformed Church. They were received by the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Galilee.

**Rome.** The Roman Catholic version of the Peace corps has been started called "Papal Volunteers." Under this some fifty Americans will be serving in Latin America. They will work under local church authorities and are getting 16 weeks' training at Fordham University, New York.

**Russia.** "Jewish life in Russia is now virtually at an end," says *Sentinel*, an American Jewish weekly. There are 15 million Jews in the world of whom 2½ mill. live in Russia.

The Russian churches have had in recent years a certain limited freedom. Once again churches are under heavy pressure, and that the authorities will not even allow them to enjoy limited freedom which they have had so far in the post war years.

Premier Khrushchev has expressed approval of Pope John's appeal to world statesmen to negotiate for world peace.

**Serbia.** Serbian Patriarch German had gone to Russia and had an interview with the Russian President.

## NEWS AND NOTES OF THE MALANKARA SYRIAN CHURCH

H. H. The Catholicos has recently celebrated the 89th birthday. Many messages of greetings had come from here and abroad.

One of the outstanding events in the recent history of the church had been the visit of the twenty and odd eastern prelates who were delegates to the third assembly of WC in New Delhi. The visitors consisted of delegates from the Russian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Greek, Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. Malabar was the scene of a great reunion since the split at Chalcedon in 451. The meeting has been a sight worthy of the angels in heaven and would pave the way for the healing of the schism which is centuries old.



H. G. The Most Rev. Mar Timotheos, 79, Metropolitan the Diocese of Kandanad has been elected as the successor H. H. The Catholicos and the Malankara Metropolitan. The Catholicos designate who has spent considerable time in Jerusalem and the Middle East, is a good Syriac scholar and above all godly man.

The Orthodox Student Movement had its anniversary Parumala at which the Rev. Fr. Golding of the Oxford Mission Calcutta, was the chief speaker.

The women students' conference was held at Balikamadhore Tiruvella, where too Fr. Golding was the chief speaker.

The 62nd anniversary of the Syrian Christian Congress was held at Thumpamon and had four sessions—women's rally, education, anniversary proper and inter communal harmony. The last function was inaugurated by H. E. Governor Giri of Kerala and presided over by Hon'ble Minister Sri. P. T. Chacko. The Rev. Dr. C. T. Eapen, President of the Congress, offered the welcome and the speakers were Hon'ble Smt. Nafeeseth Bibi, Deputy Speaker Sarvasri M. P. Govindan Nair M. L. A., C. M. Stephen, M. L. A. and Prof. C. P. Mathew.

The church sustained a serious loss by the sudden and unexpected death of H. G. Mar Severios, Metrop. of Cochin Diocese.

Sri. C. K. Kochukoshi I. A. S., member of the Church, has been appointed the District Collector of Quilon.

Hon'ble Sri. E. P. Paulose, Minister of Food, had presided over the special session of the Syrian Christian Congress held at Parumala inaugurated by H. H. the Catholicos.

## IN MEMORIAM

**H. G. The Most Rev. Mar Severios.** The Malankara Church has sustained a great loss by the sudden death of H. G. Mar Severios at an early age of 52. The outstanding thing about H. G. was that he was a staunch believer in the autonomy of the Church and he strongly supported the establishment of the Catholicate. He was a good syriac scholar and a devout man who used all his powers for the organization of his diocese and to bring it on sound financial basis. May God grant peace eternal to this chief shepherd is our humble prayer.

**Sri K. K. Kuruvilla.** The passing of Sri K. K. Kuruvilla was not only keenly felt by his fellow churchmen of the Mar Thoma

Church, but also by members of the sister churches and also by non- christians. Mr. Kuruvilla's services were not simply confined to his own church but also extended to spheres outside. He was instrumental in solving the beggar problem in Kottayam, which has set an example even to other towns to solve the problem in an effective way. He was for long the president of a co-operative bank at Kottayam. Over and above these, he was a member of the state legislature at a critical juncture in the state's history. To his own church his services were many. In all the fields he worked, he brought to bear his trust in God, his great vision, and his wonderful personality.

May light perpetual shine upon him.

**Fr. E. P. Jacob.** The sudden death of Fr. E. P. Jacob, headmaster of St. Thomas High School, Niranom and Vicar of St. George's Church, Tiruvella, at an early age was a shock to many. He was a gifted man. He was a law graduate who later took up priesthood as his vocation. With his musical talents he may be called the many stringed instrument in the possession of his mother Church. He was also a gifted teacher and speaker. His passing is a serious loss to the Church. May his soul rest in peace.

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### **The Fellowship of St. Thomas and St. Paul.**

*Patron* :—H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece, *Greek Orthodox Church.*

*Vice-Patron* :—H. G. the Most Rev. Mar Thomas Dionysios.

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The V. Rev. Archimandrite A. Lazarus, *Nilgiris, India.*

*Secretary* :—The Rev. Dr. C. T. Eapen, *The Orthodox Syrian Church,*  
*India, Adur, P. O., Travancore, S. India.*

The Fellowship aims at bringing together the members of the Eastern Churches in the sacred bond of prayer, fellowship, study and service with a view to pave the way for their reunion. Members of other Churches, interested in the reunion of Christendom, may also become members of the organization. The work of the Fellowship should be fostered by the formation of small groups in different parts of the world. An intercession leaflet for the use of the Fellowship Groups is available. All interested are requested to enrol themselves as members by communicating to the Secretary.

The Star of the East will be the organ of the Fellowship to which articles and letters are invited.

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